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DEATH.

O DEATH, in thee we reach life's consummation;
In thee we shall find peace; in thee our worries,
Anxieties and struggles will be past.
Thou art our truest friend! Thou holdest
The anodyne which cureth every ill.

Thou lookest stern, O Death; the living fear thee;
Thy countenance is severe and awe-inspiring,
And creatures shrink from thee as their worst foe.
They know thee not, for they believe that thou
Takest delight in agonies and horrors,
Disease and pain. The host of all these ills
Precedes thee often, but thou brook'st them not.
'Tis life that is replete with suffering,
Not thou, O refuge of the unfortunate,
For thou com'st as surcease of pain; thou grantest
Release from torture, and thy sweetest boon
Is peace eternal. So I call thee friend
And will proclaim thy gift as greatest blessing.

Death is the twin of birth: he blotteth out
The past but to provide for life's renewal.
All life on earth is one continuous flow
Which death and birth cut up in single lives
Of individual existences
So as to keep life ever new and fresh.

Oblivious of the day, that moulded us,
We enter life with virgin expectations;
Traditions are we of parental past,
And gain of our expanding souls we hand
To the succeeding ages which we build.
The lives of predecessors live in us
And we continue in the race to come.
Thus in the Eleusinean Mysteries
A burning torch was passed from hand to hand,
And every hand was needed in the chain
To keep the holy flame aglow—the symbol
Of spirit-life, of higher aspirations.

'Tis not desirable to eke out life
Into eternity, world without end.
Far better 't is to live in fresh renewals,
Far better to remain within time's limits.
Our fate 't is to be born, to act our part
And, whether we approve of it or not,
When all is finished, to depart resigned.
Again and evermore again. life starteth
In each new birth a fresh new consciousness
With wider tasks, new quickened interests,
And with life's worn-out problems all renewed.
But we must work the work while it is day,
For thou, O Death, wilt hush life's turbulence
And then the night will come to stay our work.

When we have tasted of the zests of life,
Have breathed the air of comprehension, have
Enjoyed the pleasures of accomplishment,
When we have felt the glow of happiness,
The thrill of love, of friendship, of endeavor,
When we have borne the day's heat and have sweated
Under the burden of our tasks, we shall,

Wearied of life's long drudgery, be glad
To sink into the arms of sleep, to rest
From all our labors, while our work lives on.
As at the end of day we greet the night,
So we grow tired of duties, pains and joys
And gladly quaff the draught of Lethe's cup.

Wilt thou be kind to me, O Death, then spare me
The time to do my duties and to finish
My lifework ere I die. Let me accomplish
The most important tasks that lie before me,
So when I die I have not lived in vain.
But has my purpose grown beyond myself,
I shall be satisfied and welcome thee.

Kinder thou art than thou appearest, Death!
Peace-bringer, healer of life's malady,
Thou lullest us into unconsciousness.
Thine eye, well do I know it, solves the transient
Into mere dust; but thou discriminatest,
Thou provest all, O just and unbribed judge,
Appli'st the touchstone of eternal worth
And thou preservest the enduring gold.
Thou settest free the slave, soothest all anguish,
Grantest an amnesty for trespasses,
Abolishest responsibilities,
Bringest cessation of the troubles which
Are harassing in life. Thou simply closest
A chapter in time's interesting book,
There to remain as we have written it,
And so thou dost no harm. Happy is he
Who neither feareth nor inviteth thee.

I honor thee, great sanctifier Death,
Lord of the realm of no return—High Priest

Of the unchangeable, thou consecratest
Our souls when gathering them unto their fathers
In their eternal home; I honor thee,
Yet will not seek thee! I am here to live
And will abide until the hour arrive
To enter on my Sabbath eve of life.
But neither shall I shrink from thee, for truly
I see no cause why I should face thee not.
Thou dost not doom me to annihilation,
Thou wipest out my trace of life as little
As any deed can ever be annulled.
Indeed, thou comest to immortalize,
To finish, to complete, to consummate,
To sanctify what I have been and done.
Therefore, I shall be ready at thy call
And deem the common destiny of all
Meet for myself, so when thou beckonest,
Friend Death, grant me thy sweet enduring rest.

EDITOR.